

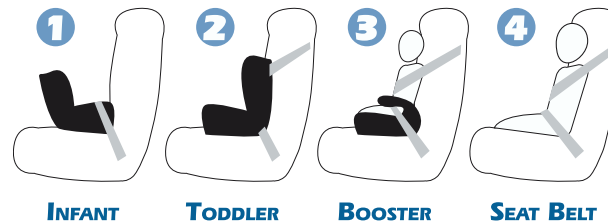
## ALWAYS REMEMBER...

- Never hold a child on your lap while riding in either the front or back seat.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for correct installation.
- The center rear seat is the safest place in the car.
- **Remember:**
  - Infants face backwards.
  - Toddlers face forward.
- Always use the car's seat belt to anchor the seat to the car.
- Make sure the seat's harness fits snugly.
- Tether straps greatly reduce head injury. If your seat is equipped with a tether, refer to your vehicle owner's manual for the location of the anchor hook-up for the tether strap.
- Set a good example by wearing your seat belt every time you travel. All drivers and front seat passengers must wear a seat belt in New Jersey. **It's the law.**
- Studies show that when children are buckled up correctly, they are less likely to be injured during a crash.
- Put your child in a car seat every time you travel - even on short trips.
- Never use a car seat that has been in a crash. Obtain a new car seat.
- Use only federally approved car seats that are less than 10 years old.

## AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2001, NEW JERSEY LAW REQUIRES:

- Children up to age 8 or 80 pounds must ride in a safety or booster seat in the rear seat of the vehicle. If there is no back seat, the child must sit in the front seat secured by a safety or booster seat.
- Children under age 8 who weigh more than 80 pounds must wear a seat belt anywhere in the vehicle.
- Passengers age 8 to 18 (regardless of weight) must wear a seat belt anywhere inside a vehicle.
- Motorists in violation of the law (Title 39:3-76.2a) can be stopped by police and issued a summons.

## 4 STEPS FOR KIDS



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# Are you using your child's car seat correctly?

## LAWS AND PENALTIES



**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**DIVISION OF HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY**



Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death of children over the age of six months in the United States. The proper use of child car seats is one of the simplest and most effective methods available for protecting the lives of our young children in the event of a motor vehicle crash.

Please make sure that children are properly protected while traveling in a motor vehicle. Only the correct use of child car seats will offer the protection your child needs. So please be aware of the facts listed in this brochure regarding the proper use of child car seats.

There are many different models of child car seats on the market today. Each one must meet federal standards and all provide good protection for your child when used correctly.

The “right” seat for you is largely a matter of personal choice. Choose a seat that fits your child and your car, read the instructions carefully, and use the seat correctly on every trip.

### **CORRECT USE IS EASY IF YOU FOLLOW FOUR STEPS:**

1. Read the manufacturer’s instructions for your car seat.
2. Face the seat in the proper direction.
  - Infant seats always face backwards. Baby rides in a semi-reclining position facing the rear of the car.
  - Convertible seats face backwards in a semi-reclining position for infants under 20 pounds and under 1 year of age, and forward in an upright position for toddlers.
3. Secure your child snugly in the car seat.
  - Always buckle the seat’s harness system securely to hold your child safely in the seat. Allow no more than one finger-width of slack between your child’s collarbone and the harness strap.
4. Secure the child car seat with a seat belt.
  - Anchoring the seat properly with a seat belt is critical. A seat that is not buckled securely to the car can tip over, slide side-ways or, in a crash, be ejected from the car. Check your instruction manual to find out how to route the seat belt properly and fasten it tightly.

## **CARS WITH PASSENGER-SIDE AIR BAGS**



*An inflating air bag can injure infants in a car seat.*

If your car has a passenger-side front air bag and your baby is under 20 pounds and under 1 year of age:

### **1. NEVER put your baby in the front seat.**

The back of the rear-facing car seat is located very close to the dashboard, where the air bag is housed. If the air bag inflates, it

may hit the back of the car seat very hard, and the impact could seriously injure your baby.

**2. ALWAYS put your baby in the back seat, still facing the rear.** Read your vehicle owner’s manual for instructions about children and air bags. An inflating air bag can injure infants in a car seat.

## **CAR SEAT GUIDE**



### **Infant Car Seats**

- Designed for infants up to 20 pounds.
- Always face the rear of the car and recline as manufacturer recommends for infants.



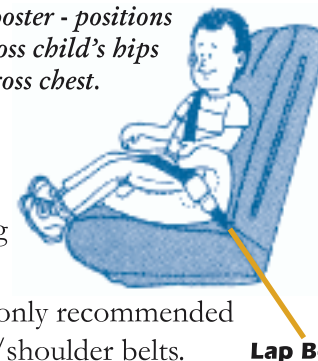
### **Convertible / Toddler Seats:**

- Designed to be used from birth to 40 pounds. In the infant position, the seat reclines and faces rearward.
- For toddlers weighing 20 - 40 pounds, the seat faces forward in an upright position.

*“Belt Positioning” Booster - positions lap belt properly across child’s hips and shoulder belt across chest.*

### **Booster Seats**

- Designed for children weighing over 40 pounds.
- Booster seats are only recommended for use with lap/shoulder belts.



### **Protection for Children Over 40 Pounds:**

A booster seat should be used only when a child has outgrown a convertible/toddler car seat. When a child’s shoulders grow too wide to sit comfortably in the seat, or the tops of his ears can be seen above the back of the seat, it’s time to graduate to a new method of buckling up.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends and New Jersey law now requires that children between 40-80 pounds use a “belt-positioning” booster seat.